



## Faculty Senate

### Minutes of THE FACULTY SENATE OF ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2021-2022 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 on WebEx. The following members were present:

Dr. Michael Davis	Dr. Jeremy Schwehm
Dr. Pam Dixon	Dr. Masanori Kuroki
Dr. David Eshelman	Dr. Jamie Stacy
Dr. V. Carole Smith	Dr. Peter Dykema
Dr. Newt Hilliard	Dr. Arwen Taylor
Dr. Efosa Idemudia	Dr. Rene Couture
Dr. Sean Huss	Dr. Melissa Darnell
Dr. Julie Mikles-Schleterman	Dr. Bethany Swindell
Dr. Sean Reed	

Absent: Dr. Cynthia Jacobs, Dr. Asim Shrestha, Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh

Guests: Dr. Barbara Johnson, Dr. Blake Bedsole, Jana Crouch, Jessica Brock

- I. **Call to Order:** Motion to call the meeting to order from Dr. Efosa Idemudia, seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. Motion carried. Dr. Jamie Stacy called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.
  - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** from the September 14, 2021 meeting. Minutes were approved as distributed.

Motion to suspend the rules was adopted to allow the guests to present first. Agenda item B from new business will go first.

## II. New Business – Guests

- A. **Enrollment Numbers & Recruitment:** Dr. Blake Bedsole discussed organizational changes - enrollment management is now in student affairs. Dr. Bedsole presented slides and discussed enrollment changes and trends. Total enrollment peaked in fall 2018 with 12,101. After 2018, there was a big drop off and the difference is the concurrent students. Non-concurrent students were declining since 2015. Another change impacting enrollment is the new scholarship matrix that went into effect fall 2018. Scholarship amounts are going to decrease and will create a larger financial gap. If there are no changes, it is projected that ATU total enrollment would be 7686 in fall 2032. Dr. Bedsole discussed the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee is discussing enrollment strategies and future plans.

- Dr. Jeremy Schwehm questioned the impact of the scholarship gap on recruiting. Dr. Bedsole replied that the budget is done at the Executive Council. Scholarships are automatic and freshman recruiting is aid dependent. ATU cut the scholarship amount going into fall 2021. UCA does not give aid based on ACT score and instead does it on high school GPA.
- Dr. Sean Huss asked if ATU is pricing ourselves out of the market? Dr. Bedsole stated that 2-year schools have larger recruitment budgets and are the biggest competitor. Dr. Huss asked if the budget cuts were a barrier. Dr. Bedsole explained that UCA has 9 recruiters and ATU has 4, with spots being cut due to budget.
- Dr. Sean Huss asked about the bulletin boards at RHS and the photo that shows a lot of colleges represented, but ATU was not on the board. Dr. Bedsole stated that Jessica was at RHS this morning and updated the billboard. Jessica Brock explained that the bulletin boards rotate and the next visit for Russellville is in November. The recruiters try to stop by the local area high schools at least once a month and high schools outside of the area about 1-2 times a cycle (August – April).
- Dr. Huss asked if there was an enrollment plan. Dr. Bedsole discussed a white paper which details a new effort coming next semester to increase enrollment.
- Dr. Julie Mikles-Schleterman inquired if the loss of new student enrollment was due to UCA granting scholarships on GPA instead of ACT score. Dr. Bedsole agreed that this factor has a huge impact on recruitment and enrollment. Additionally, UCA has \$32 million budget and ATU has \$18 million.
- Dr. Jeremy Schwehm asked about concurrent students. Dr. Bedsole stated that those students contribute to enrollment and matriculation is about 40% or 1/3 of the freshman class.
- Dr. Julie Mikles-Schleterman asked what percent of concurrent students enroll? Jana Crouch replied that about 25-30%, which is the average for nation. ATU has about 1800 concurrent students currently.
- Dr. Jeremy Schwehm asked how faculty can help. Dr. Bedsole said that supporting events and being available for faculty visits with campus tours.

### III. Committee Updates

#### i. Standing Committees

1. Budget Advisory Committee (Stacy): A new "Fee" Subcommittee has been established headed by Dr. Cass. A process will be developed for how to submit fee requests (such as course fee).
2. General Education Committee (Taylor): No report
3. Institutional Aid Committee (Reed): No report
4. Shared Governance Committee (Stacy): No report.
5. Campus Space and Utilization Committee (Hilliard): No report
6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): met and reviewed proposals for sabbaticals

7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): 14 appeals reviewed in September
8. Professional Development Committee (Taylor): No report
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (TBA): No report
- ii. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees
  1. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss/Darnell): Collecting information
  2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis/Stacy): Items approved by Board in September. Open enrollment coming up.
  3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Smith/Huss): HR states that they have handled the issues. Invite HR to come discuss with Faculty Senate.
  4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Committee is in data collection mode.
  5. Restructuring Committee (Stacy): Meeting every Monday for the semester. Forums are ongoing for input
  6. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Mikles-Schluterman/Couture): Next mtg is Oct 25.

#### IV. New Business

- A. **Curricular Items:** <https://www.atu.edu/standingcommittees/curriculum/2022-23/Summary%20Proposals%20CC%20Sept%2028%20FS%20Oct%2012.pdf>  
 Motion to take the items as a block from Dr. Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Huss. Motion carried.  
 Motion to approve the curricular items from Dr. Bethany Swindell, seconded by Dr. Newt Hilliard. Motion carried.
- B. **Graduation Rates:** Dr. Hilliard had to leave for a Governor School meeting. Item moved to old business.
- C. **Faculty Releases & Workload:** Concerns over workload and teaching. Dr. Johnson stated that it is not normal to have no teaching load when getting a release. There is only one full-time faculty member that does not have a teaching load. Dr. Eshelman addressed a rumor that Program Directors were going to only receive one course release per year instead of one per year. Dr. Johnson explained the different roles and different job descriptions. Dr. Robertson will provide the job descriptions.
- D. **Anonymous Letters:** Received several anonymous letters through the Faculty Senate email.
  - i. HyFlex Model – not rolling out the model. Focused and open to some faculty but not expected. Training is coming up.
  - ii. Masking in Tucker with athletics – issue is known and working to address.
  - iii. Purchase of property – why if we don't have money and laying off employee? Bowen said purpose is 20-year outlook.
  - iv. Acknowledgement and training – outstanding training are provided in OneTech. Want to see the trainings we completed. Asked HR and waiting for answer.

V. **Old Business**

- A. Concerns related to the primacy of academics / Provost:** No report
- B. COVID Updates:** The Task Force continues to meet. Numbers are trending down. The mask mandate is still in effect. There was a question why faculty still needs to do the daily health screening. Dr. Stacy will bring this up at the next Task Force meeting.
- C. VPAA Update:** Dr. Johnson stated that the APEX Center has a new name – Tech Learning Center – and is now located in the library. Scott Tomlin is the coordinator. Dr. Johnson discussed the upcoming building renovations: Crabaugh, Dean, and Witherspoon will receive new HVAC systems with Crabaugh administration temporarily housed in Brown. Sponsored Programs is now in the Graduate College. The money to pay for the building updates is from the American Rescue Plan and money must be spent on specific items by April 2022. Teaching technology innovation grants are available up to \$25,000 for faculty for creative teaching ideas. Online training is available for hybrid and hyflex with a stipend for those that complete the training. ATU is replacing desktop computers with laptops, docking stations, and two monitors.
- Dr. Reed asked about the impact of the HVAC work. Dr. Johnson emphasized that any personal belongings or items that need to be protected should be removed from offices while the work is ongoing.
- D. Motion of a Vote of Confidence or No Confidence in Dr. Bowen:** On April 26, a motion by Dr. Reed and seconded by Dr. Schwehm was brought before the Senate: “I move to proceed with a vote of Confidence or No Confidence in Dr. Bowen”. This motion was postponed immediately with motion by Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon and seconded by Dr. Shellie Hannah: “Due to the Board of Trustees reaching out to the Faculty Senate and making a good faith effort to promote communication between faculty and administration, I make a motion to postpone the Confidence/No Confidence vote until the October Faculty Senate Meeting”. The original motion to proceed with a vote of Confidence or No Confidence in Dr. Bowen is back on the floor. Dr. Schwehm moved that the vote be postponed until the December Faculty Senate meeting, it was seconded by Dr. Reed.
- Dr. Stacy emphasized that the Board of Trustees is waiting to get the consultant report and Faculty Senate requested a copy of the report.
  - Dr. Huss added that Faculty Senate is setting up a transparent and inclusive process to poll the faculty and get input as the last time faculty were asked was March 2021. The vote will be based on the faculty wants and Faculty Senate needs feedback to ensure the vote reflects what the faculty want. Dr. Schwehm agreed and stressed that we must get the process right and provide opportunities to gather information to make the most informed decision.
  - Dr. Davis stated that Faculty Senate has had 6 months to get the process right. We knew this was coming. Not asking that we call for a vote but why are we in this position to have to wait two more months when many were prepared to vote 6 months ago. We showed good faith to the board to postpone to October. Dr. Schwehm discussed the importance of the consultant and there needs to be a little more time to let that play out.

- Dr. Darnell asked why October? Was it arbitrary? Was the process supposed to be done by October? Dr. Huss stated that Faculty Senate had hoped that the consultant process would be finished by September, but that didn't happen.
- Dr. Stacy encouraged everyone to stay engaged and give feedback. Dr. Huss asked about sending information out via the Blackboard organization shell. Dr. Swindell stated that information can be distributed to faculty and all information should be sent with the survey. Dr. Eshelman asked if pertinent information could be highlighted in the information as there is a lot to digest and it can be overwhelming.
- Dr. Schwehm stated that this is big of an issue for just Senate and all faculty need to be stewards of the institution as faculty and staff are the bedrock. **Motion carries**

**VI. Open Forum**

- The RHS bulletin board has changed and now displays ATU.

**VII. Announcements and Information Items**

- Innovations Grant [www.atu.edu/admin/docs/innovation-grant-application-and-workbook.pdf](http://www.atu.edu/admin/docs/innovation-grant-application-and-workbook.pdf)
- November 4 is Time Out for Tech
- Flu shot clinic on Oct 20 with nursing students giving the vaccines

**VI. Adjournment:** **Dr. Reed moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Eshelman. Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dr. Jamie Stacy*

Dr. Jamie Stacy, Chair

*Bethany Swindell*

Bethany Swindell, Secretary